

Local Emergency Management Agencies



Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority

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Local Government
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Functional and Organizational Analysis of Local Emergency Management Agencies

Sources of Information

- Representatives of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency
- Representatives of Local Emergency Management Agencies
- Code of Alabama 1975 § 31-9-1 through 31-9-85
- Alabama Government Manual, 13th Edition (2010), pages 197-198
- Alabama Emergency Management Agency Records Disposition Authority (2005)
- County Commissions' Records Disposition Authority (2015)
- Alabama Emergency Management Agency website (<http://ema.alabama.gov/>)
- Alabama Association of Emergency Managers website (<http://www.aaem.us/#>)

Historical Context

In language now codified in the Code of Alabama 1975 § 31-9-9 and -10, the Alabama Emergency Management Act of 1955 “authorized and directed” the governing body of “[e]ach political subdivision of the state...to establish a local organization for emergency management in accordance with the state emergency management plan...” Local emergency management agency (EMA) directors were empowered (1) to develop agreements with other local, state, and federal authorities “for reciprocal emergency management aid and assistance in case of disaster too great to be dealt with unassisted”; and (2) to render assistance under these agreements if an emergency occurred. The 1955 act was amended in 1978 to provide for grants to the political entities of the state. In 1983, it was amended again to rename the state agency overseeing emergency management as the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA).

Agency Organization

Local emergency management agencies fall under a variety of jurisdictions. Most are county agencies; but Huntsville’s and Montgomery’s are under city government, while four other EMAs (Coffee County, Jefferson County, Madison County and Mobile County) operate under independent boards. The Poarch Creek Nation also has an EMA. Each local EMA’s governing body is authorized to appoint a director, “who shall have direct responsibility for the organization, administration, and operation” of the agency, subject to the governing body’s direction and control. In 2007, Code of Alabama 1975 § 31-9-61 established requirements for certifying EMA directors, and the Alabama Association of Emergency Managers (AAEM) administers a four-level Certified Emergency Manager program. Although far from uniform in their internal procedures and administration, all local EMAs have the same basic powers and responsibilities.

Agency Function and Subfunctions

Local EMAs are one of the agencies responsible for the Law Enforcement and Emergency Powers function of Alabama local government. Their mandate is to carry out an emergency

management program within their jurisdiction. They coordinate with other entities, including the AEMA, Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, the State Military Department, municipalities, counties, school districts, states, and the federal government. Through cooperative arrangements, disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities (covering both natural and man-made hazards) are planned and coordinated within each local EMA's jurisdiction.

In the performance of their mandated function, local emergency management agencies may engage in the following subfunctions:

- **Promulgating and Planning.** The Code of Alabama 1975 § 31-9-6 empowers the governor, acting through the AEMA, to “make, amend, and rescind the necessary orders, rules, and regulations to carry out the provisions of the [Alabama Emergency Management Act].” In turn, the AEMA is authorized to “prepare a comprehensive plan and program for the emergency management of this state,” coordinating with “the political subdivisions of this state” on preparing “plans and programs for emergency management” within each local EMA's jurisdiction. At the county or municipal level, representatives from local EMAs and other public safety agencies may serve on advisory or oversight boards and committees charged with emergency planning, hazard mitigation, and other emergency management responsibilities.
- **Coordinating Preparedness Programs.** The Code of Alabama 1975 § 31-9-6(3) mandates the AEMA “to institute training programs and public information programs” on a statewide basis. To qualify for federal funding, local EMAs conduct regular emergency exercises and create emergency operations plans for assessment by AEMA. Although the AEMA conducts courses of its own, many local EMA training programs are funded by FEMA and subject to federal grant requirements. Local EMAs also deliver training and submit reports on planning to combat natural hazards and emergencies involving weapons of mass destruction, nuclear power plants, and terrorism. Both the AEMA and AAEM administer certification programs for local EMA employees. Such measures establish a framework for ensuring that each EMA jurisdiction is adequately prepared to deal with various categories of emergencies. In addition, local EMAs undertake a variety of outreach programs to educate their communities in emergency planning and response. These may include presentations at local schools or community centers and live or online courses of instruction.
- **Coordinating Response and Recovery Assistance.** The Code of Alabama 1975 § 31-9-6 requires the AEMA to cooperate with the President of the United States and other federal or state authorities in coordinating Alabama's emergency response in times of crisis. Local EMAs implement this coordination locally. Under the Code of Alabama 1975 § 31-9-10, specific emergency management powers granted to local EMAs through their governing bodies, include, but are not limited to, the following: appropriating and expending funds; obtaining and distributing equipment and supplies; directing and controlling the development of emergency management plans (in accord with state and federal authorities); appointing and employing air raid wardens, rescue teams, auxiliary fire and police personnel, and other emergency management workers; establishing primary and secondary control centers during emergencies; and implementing curfews

and other special regulations that may be established by local or state governmental entities. Evacuations, however, may only be ordered by the governor or state EMA director.

- **Administering Internal Operations.** A significant portion of the local EMA's work includes general administrative, financial, and personnel activities performed to support its programmatic areas, including:

Managing the Agency: Activities include internal office management activities common to most government agencies such as corresponding and communicating, scheduling, meeting, documenting policy and procedures, reporting, litigating, legislating (drafting, tracking), publicizing and providing information, managing records, and managing information systems and technology.

Managing Finances: Activities include budgeting (preparing and reviewing budget package, submitting the budget package to the Department of Finance, documenting amendments and performance of the budget); purchasing (requisitioning and purchasing supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products received); accounting for the expenditure, encumbrance, disbursement, and reconciliation of funds within the agency's budget through a uniform system of accounting and reporting; authorizing travel; contracting with companies or individuals; bidding for products and services; and assisting in the audit process.

Managing Human Resources: Activities include recruiting and hiring eligible individuals to fill positions within the agency; providing compensation to employees; providing benefits to employees such as leave, health insurance, unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, injury compensation, retirement, and death benefits; supervising employees by evaluating performance, granting leave, and monitoring the accumulation of leave; training and providing continuing education for employees; and disciplining.

Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources: Activities include inventorying and accounting for non-consumable property and reporting property information to the appropriate authority; leasing and/or renting offices or facilities; providing security for property managed by the agency; insuring property; and assigning, inspecting and maintaining agency property, including vehicles.

Records Appraisal of Local Emergency Management Agencies

The following is a discussion of the two major categories of records created and/or maintained by local emergency management agencies (EMAs): Temporary Records and Permanent Records.

Temporary Records

Temporary records should be held for what is considered to be their active life and disposed of once all fiscal, legal, and administrative requirements have been met. Some of the temporary records created by local EMAs are discussed below:

- **Disaster Public Assistance Files.** Local EMA staff coordinate with state and federal authorities to obtain grants/loans for restoring public systems and facilities after a disaster. This series documents the application and disbursement of federal assistance to communities within the local EMA's jurisdiction. Typical records include applications for assistance, briefing materials, project worksheets, correspondence, documentation of funds disbursed, and monthly claims for reimbursement of expenses. The Code of Federal Regulations (44 CFR 13.42) mandates a three-year retention for these records after FEMA Public Assistance projects are closed out.

Permanent Records

The Archives Division recommends the following records as permanent:

Promulgating Rules and Regulations

- **Minutes, Agendas, and Packets of Local Emergency Planning or Advisory Boards and Committees.** These records document proceedings of all committees and/or boards responsible for oversight and advice on emergency planning, hazard mitigation or migration, or other emergency management functions within the local EMA's jurisdiction. They may include minutes, agendas, and packet materials; staff reports; correspondence with local, state, and federal agencies; and related documentation. These records provide primary documentation of emergency management programs and planning among various jurisdictions in and beyond the local area.
- **Administrative Policies and Procedures.** These records include policies and procedures established by the local EMA on a variety of issues regarding its relations with the public, other governmental or private entities, and employees. They provide ongoing documentation of policy development at the executive level.
- **Administrative Correspondence.** This correspondence documents the formulation of policy or rule-making decisions by the local EMA director or other senior emergency management officials, as distinct from correspondence documenting routine, day-to-day operations of the agency.

Coordinating Preparedness Programs

- **County Emergency Operations Plans, Procedures, and Guidelines.** These records consist of comprehensive emergency management plans, emergency operations plans, continuity of operations (COOP) plans, and standard operating procedures (SOP's) and guidelines (SOG's) created by each local EMA. They establish a framework for ensuring that the jurisdiction is adequately prepared to deal with various categories of emergencies. According to federal requirements, emergency operations plans must be updated regularly. Copies of all local emergency operations plans are provided to the state EMA, which maintains them permanently under its RDA. However, the approved plans are deemed by the local EMA officials staff consulted to have enough importance to warrant permanent retention at the local level.
- **Public Education Program Records.** These records are related to the design and implementation of emergency management educational and outreach programs presented by the local EMA. They may include planning documentation, program descriptions, instructional materials, course outlines, enrollment and attendance records, presentations, audio and video materials, and course evaluations. Planning and program documentation are appraised as permanent.

Coordinating Response and Recovery Assistance

- **Emergency and Disaster Incident Records.** These records document planning and response activities taken during and after emergencies that occur within the local EMA's jurisdiction. They may include action plans, photographs, incident reports, damage reports, response reports, weather event files, correspondence, and related records, exclusive of those covered in Disaster Public Assistance Files. Besides their utility to the EMA in planning the future management of similar emergencies, these records have historical value in documenting memorable disasters occurring in the county.
- **Hazardous Materials Incident Reports.** These records detail all responses to hazardous materials incidents such as chemical tanker accidents, chemical spills in a chicken plant or tanker spill in a local community. The report contains the date and type of incident, the name and address of the party involved, and the incident's disposition (such as the recovery of costs involved, results of incident on environment, the final resolution of the incident, etc.). Because environmental consultants frequently contact local EMA offices when conducting Phase I impact studies, these reports have long-term importance and are recommended for permanent retention.

Administering Internal Operations

- **Historical Files – determined by the creator of the records.** These records may include newsletters, brochures, periodicals, photographs, and video and audio recordings that document agency activities and are retained for historical purposes.

- **Geographic Information System (GIS) Records.** These records consist of geospatial data that describes particular locations, areas, or geographic features within the county. GIS systems may be used for a variety of purposes, such as planning and zoning, construction projects, or emergency response. Although records may be continually updated, the system itself is maintained as a permanent data file.
- **Job Classifications and Pay Plans-if not under a County or Municipal Personnel.** These records document job classifications for all positions covered by a local EMA's staff. They include the title, qualifications, duties, and pay range for each position. (Copies of these items for EMA's with county or municipal oversight are covered under the County Commission or Municipalities RDAs.)

Permanent Records List Local Emergency Management Agencies

Promulgating Rules and Regulations

1. Minutes, Agendas, and Packets of Local Emergency Planning or Advisory Boards and Committees
2. Administrative Policies and Procedures
3. Administrative Correspondence

Coordinating Preparedness Programs

1. County Emergency Operations Plans, Procedures, and Guidelines
2. Public Education Program Records

Coordinating Disaster Response and Recovery Assistance

1. Emergency and Disaster Incident Records
2. Hazardous Materials Incident Reports

Administering Internal Operations

1. Annual Reports
2. Historical Files
3. Publicity Files
4. Websites and Social Media Sites
5. GIS Systems – Historical Snapshots
6. Budgeting Records – Approved Annual Budgets, Annual Financial Reports
7. Audit Reports
8. General Ledgers and Detailed Year-End Trial Balances Created Prior to 1975
9. Grant Project Files – Final Narrative Reports
10. Employee Handbooks
11. Employee Newsletters
12. Job Classifications and Pay Plans – if not under a County or Municipal Personnel Department
13. Training Records – Standards, Policies, Procedures, and Publications

Local Emergency Management Agencies Records Disposition Authority

This Records Disposition Authority (RDA) is issued by the Local Government Records Commission under the authority granted by the Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-13-5 and 41-13-22 through 24. It was compiled by the Archives Division, Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), which serves as the Commission's staff, in cooperation with representatives of the Local Emergency Management Agencies. The RDA lists records created and maintained by the Agency in carrying out their mandated functions and activities. It establishes minimum retention periods and disposition instructions for those records and provides the legal authority for the Agency to implement records destruction.

Alabama law requires public officials to create and maintain records that document the business of their offices. These records must be protected from "mutilation, loss, or destruction," so that they may be transferred to an official's successor in office and may be made available to members of the public. Records also must be kept in accordance with auditing standards approved by the Examiners of Public Accounts (Code of Alabama 1975 § 36-12-2, 36-12-4, and 41-5-23). For assistance in implementing this RDA, or for advice on records disposition or other records management concerns, contact the agency records manager or ADAH Archives Division at (334) 242-4452.

Explanation of Records Requirements

The RDA shall govern the disposition of all records, regardless of format, created by the agency from creation to dissolution. Please contact the staff of the Department of Archives and History before destroying any records created prior to 1940.

This RDA supersedes any previous records disposition schedules or RDAs governing the retention of the records created by the Agency. Copies of superseded schedules are no longer valid and may not be used for records disposition.

The RDA establishes retention and disposition instructions for records listed below, regardless of the medium on which those records may be kept. Electronic mail, for example, is a communications tool that may record permanent or temporary information. As for records in any other format, the retention periods for e-mail records are governed by the requirements of the subfunctions to which the records belong.

Certain other record-like materials are not actually regarded as official records and may be disposed of under this RDA. Such materials include (1) duplicate record copies that do not require official action, so long as the creating office maintains the original record for the period required; (2) catalogs, trade journals, and other publications received that require no action and do not document records created for short-term, internal purposes, may include, but are not limited to, telephone call-back messages, drafts of ordinary documents not needed for their evidential value, copies of material sent for information purposes but not needed by the receiving office for future business, and internal communications about social activities; (5) honorary

materials, plaques, awards, presentations, certificates, and gifts received or maintained by the agency staff. They may be disposed of without documentation of destruction. agency activities; (3) stocks of blank stationery, blank forms, or other surplus materials that are not subject to audit and have become obsolete; (4) transitory records, which are temporary

Records Disposition Requirements

This section of the RDA is arranged by subfunctions of the Agency and lists the groups of records created and/or maintained as a result of activities and transactions performed in carrying out these subfunctions. The Agency may submit requests to revise specific records disposition requirements to the Local Government Records Commission for consideration at its regular biannual meetings.

Promulgating and Planning

1.01 Minutes, Agendas, and Packets of Local Emergency Planning or Advisory Boards and Committees. These records document proceedings of all committees and/or boards responsible for oversight and advice on emergency planning, hazard mitigation or migration, or other emergency management functions within the local EMA's jurisdiction. They may include minutes, agendas, and packet materials; staff reports; correspondence with local, state, and federal agencies; and related documentation.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

1.02 Recordings of Meetings. Recordings may provide a verbatim account of meetings of the local emergency planning committee, emergency management oversight board, and other planning entity. They are normally used only as an aid to preparation of the minutes.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until minutes are approved.

1.03 Staff and Planning Meeting Minutes, Notes, and Packets. Local EMA staff may meet regularly or periodically (either internally or with staff of other agencies, stakeholders, and partners) to plan operations or review events. These records may include notes of meetings and informational materials reviewed by staff.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

1.04 Administrative Policies and Procedures. These records include policies and procedures established by the local EMA on a variety of issues regarding its relations with the public, other governmental or private entities, and employees.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

1.05 Administrative Correspondence. This correspondence documents the formulation of policy or rule-making decisions by the local EMA director or other emergency management officials. It does not cover day-to-day, routine operations of the agency.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Coordinating Preparedness Programs

2.01 County Emergency Operations Plans, Procedures, and Guidelines. These records consist of comprehensive emergency management plans, emergency operations plans, continuity of operations (COOP) plans, and standard operating procedures (SOP's) and guidelines (SOG's) created by each local EMA. They establish a framework for ensuring that the jurisdiction is adequately prepared to deal with various categories of emergencies.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

2.02 Emergency Exercise and Training Records. These records document the performance of federally mandated emergency training exercises for assessment by the state EMA, as well as participation in live or online training courses. Included may be exercise scenarios and sequences of events, training schedule calendars and course announcements, lists of participants or attendee rosters, evaluations and critiques, and quarterly reports on training and exercise activities submitted to the state EMA.

- a. **Quarterly training and exercising reports submitted to the state EMA.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after submission to the AEMA.

- b. **All other records.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

2.03 Public Education Program Records. These records related to the design and implementation of emergency management educational and outreach programs presented by the local EMA. They may include planning documentation, program descriptions, instructional materials, course outlines, enrollment and attendance records, presentations, audio and video materials, and course evaluations.

- a. **Planning documentation** (policies, procedures, standards, and publications).

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

- b. **All other records.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

2.04 Plans, Specifications, and Blueprints of Community Buildings. These files include plans, specifications, blueprints, and related records of public or commercial buildings in the community. The local EMA maintains them for emergency response purposes. These records may document building design, construction, and condition, as well access and egress points and routes. Included may be original blueprints, specifications, elevation details, and floor plans; plans of alterations, renovations, or repairs; and plans of escape routes, fire suppression systems, and other information needed for emergency response.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain current records for life of the building or until superseded.

Coordinating Response and Recovery Assistance

3.01 Emergency and Disaster Incident Records. These records document planning and response activities taken during and after emergencies that occur within the local EMA's jurisdiction. They may include action plans, photographs, incident reports, damage reports, response reports, weather event files, correspondence, and related records, exclusive of those covered in Disaster Public Assistance Files.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

3.02 Disaster Public Assistance Files. This series documents the application and disbursement of federal assistance to communities within the county EMA's jurisdiction. Typical records include applications for assistance, briefing materials, project worksheets, correspondence, documentation of funds disbursed, and monthly claims for reimbursement of expenses.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after federal audit is conducted.

3.03 Hazardous Materials Incident Reports. These records detail all responses to hazardous materials incidents such as chemical tanker accidents, chemical spills in a chicken plant, or tanker spills in a local community. The report contains the date and type of incident, the name and address of the party involved, and the incident's disposition (such as the recovery of costs involved, results of incident on environment, the final resolution of incident, etc.).

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

3.04 Tier II Reports. These records are reports filed by companies and businesses subject to the Community Right to Know Act, detailing chemicals (hazardous materials) stored in their facilities.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after replacement by current Tier II report.

Administering Internal Operations: Managing the Agency

4.01 Administrative Reference Files. These records include materials not created by the local EMA; they are collected and used only as reference sources of information. They may include FEMA Public Assistance or other information related to an emergency or disaster.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

4.02 Annual Reports. Local EMAs may create annual narrative and/or financial reports describing their activities during the calendar or fiscal year. Such reports provide summary documentation of EMA functions, projects, and activities, as well as an ongoing agency history.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

4.03 Historical Files. These records may include newsletters, brochures, periodicals, photographs, and/or video and audio recordings that document agency activities and that are retained for historical purposes.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

4.04 Publicity Files. These records may include press releases, public service announcements, publications, or other materials issued to publicize agency activities, services, and programs.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

4.05 Websites and Social Media Sites. Local EMAs develop websites or social media sites for responding to public inquiries and disseminating information to the public. Material on the site may include agency contact information, updates on activities and programs, and public service announcements.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. Preserve a copy of the site annually, or as often as significant changes are made.

4.06 Routine Correspondence. This correspondence documents routine interactions with other emergency management or governmental entities, local citizens and businesses, and the general public. It pertains to day-to-day matters such as answering inquiries, providing information, or performing mandated services, rather than to policy development or issues of long-term administrative impact.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

4.07 Legal Case Files. These records document lawsuits filed by or against the local EMA.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after the case is closed.

4.08 Complaint Files/Unlitigated Claims for Damages. These records document damage claims against the EMA that are resolved without litigation.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after settlement or denial of complaint or claim.

4.09 Geographic Information System (GIS) Records. These records consist of geospatial data that describes particular locations, areas, or geographic features within the county. GIS systems may be used for a variety of purposes, such as planning and zoning, construction projects, or emergency response. Although records may be continually updated, the system itself is maintained as a perpetual data file.

- a. **Datasets** (e.g.: base datasets, such as ground and water features, used to compile other layers of primary focus; datasets of buildings, structures, and businesses; census datasets; communication or emergency dispatch datasets; engineering, environmental, storm water and flooding datasets, etc.; datasets for output documents, such as maps and aerial photographs.)
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.

Note: Output documents (such as maps and aerial photographs) may have separate dispositions in other sections of this RDA.

- b. **GIS system and metadata documentation.** These files include hardware and software manuals, metadata lists, and warranties.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain former system documentation 2 years after audit in the year in which the former hardware, software, or datasets no longer exist anywhere in the agency and all permanent records have been migrated to the new system.

- c. **Historical snapshots.** These records are annual snapshots of the entire GIS system.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. Preserve a complete copy of the system annually, or as often as significant changes are made to layers or datasets.

4.10 Geographic Information System (GIS) Records Used in 9-1-1 Dispatch Operations.

These records may include street, road right-of-way, road centerline, hydrant, tax parcel, or other data maintained or updated by dispatching unit. Disposition is as follows:

- a. **Information in GIS system maintained by local EMA.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after information has been superseded.
- b. **Information in GIS system not maintained by local EMA.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

4.11 Computer Systems Documentation. These files include hardware and software manuals and CDs, warranties, records of access/authorities, file naming conventions.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain former system documentation 2 years after audit in the year the former hardware and software no longer exist anywhere in the agency and all permanent records have been migrated to the new system.

4.12 Records Management Documentation.

- a. **Records documenting implementation of the EMA's approved RDA.** These records include records management plans, records inventories, finding aids, and destruction notices.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- b. **Copy of approved RDA.** The RDA provides legal guidelines for the disposition of all agency records. The county commission should maintain a signed copy of its RDA.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after audit in the year in which the RDA was superseded.
- c. **Records request forms.** County agencies may ask visitors who wish to examine records to complete an identification form before providing access. Information in such forms may include visitor's name and contact information, date and time of request, records requested, reason for request, and staff comments.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit or until any resulting litigation is concluded.

4.13 Office Administration Records.

- a. **Mailing Lists; mail, telephone, and fax machine logs.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.
- b. **Desk calendars and other scheduling devices.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

Administering Internal Operations: Managing Finances

5.01 Budgeting Records. These records document preparing a budget request package and reporting the status of funds, requesting amendments of allotments, and reporting program performance.

- a. **Approved annual budgets.** Final EMA budget approved by the county commission, city council, or other funding agency.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. If copy of budget is included with minutes, retain additional copies for useful life.
- b. **Records documenting budget performance during the budget cycle.** Budgeted and actual revenue reports, revenue reports, investment reports, expenditure reports, encumbrance reports, etc.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- c. **Annual financial reports.** At the end of the fiscal year, a summary statement of the EMA's finances may be created.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. If a copy of the report is included with the minutes, retain additional copies for useful life.

5.02 Audit Reports. These records document the EMA's financial condition and the findings of the Examiners of Public Accounts or private auditor during each audit period.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

5.03 Accounting Records.

- a. **Routine accounting records.** These are records of original entry or other routine accounting transactions, including journals, registers, ledgers, bank statements, deposit slips, canceled checks, etc.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

Note: Disposition for grant-related accounting records is provided under RDA item 5.08.

- b. **General ledgers and detailed year-end trial balances.** These are records of final entry for all financial transactions: collecting revenue (taxing and licensing), purchasing, investing, administering state and federal funds, and general accounting.
 - i. Records created prior to 1975.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.
 - ii. Records created in or after 1975.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the record was created.

5.04 Purchasing Records. These records document the requisitioning and purchasing of supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods and services, and authorizing payment for products. Records in this series may include, but are not limited to, purchase orders, invoices, purchasing card receipts, and receiving reports.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

5.05 Contracts, Leases, Franchises, and Agreements. These records document the negotiation, fulfillment, and termination of all contracts, leases, franchises, and agreements entered into by the EMA, including final contracts that are subject to the bid process.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after expiration of the contract (Code of Alabama 1975 § 6-2-33).

5.06 Records of Formal Bids. These records document the bid process, including the EMA's requests for proposals and unsuccessful responses from service vendors.

- a. **Records documenting bids on products or services obtained.** These records include requests for bid proposals, successful and unsuccessful bids by product or service vendors, and related correspondence.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 7 years after the date bids were opened (Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-16-54e).

- b. **Lists of eligible bidders.** EMAs may compile lists of persons or businesses who have filed requests to be notified of bids on projects, products, or services rendered.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after last contact with listed vendors.

Note: Requests from bidders to be included on the list may be treated as Routine Correspondence.

- c. **Correspondence with vendors slated for removal from the list of eligible bidders.** Under the Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-16-4(a), any listed bidder who fails to respond after receiving three solicitations for bids may be stricken from the eligible list. This correspondence documents the county commission's efforts to warn unresponsive vendors that they will be dropped from the list unless they ask to remain eligible. It includes forms or letters sent out by the office and any responses from vendors.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after audit in the year in which the bidder is removed from the list.

5.07 Vendor Verifications of Employees' Legal Immigration Status. These records document enforcement of Section 9 of Alabama Act 2011-535, commonly known as the Immigration Act. They consist of affidavits and/or E-Verify Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) stipulating that active or prospective vendors do not knowingly employ illegal immigrants.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after last contact with vendor.

5.08 Grant Project Files. These records document the EMA's application for and conduct of grant projects funded by local, state, federal, or private sources.

- a. **Financial records, interim narrative reports, and correspondence.** These records include financial reports, interim narrative reports, background materials, and other non-financial supporting documentation for grants awarded. Also included are records relating to unsuccessful grant applications.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after submission of final financial report or denial of application.
- b. **Subsidiary financial records.** These records include accounting or purchasing records and any other subsidiary financial documentation of federal grants, excluding financial reports. (See federal Rule 1354.)
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after submission of final financial report.
- c. **Final narrative reports.** Final narrative reports are submitted according to the requirements of the funding agency. They summarize the goals of the grant, how the money was used, and what was accomplished.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

5.09 Investment Reports. These records provide summary documentation of the EMA's financial investments.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

5.10 Travel Records. These records document requests by EMA personnel for authorization to travel on official business, and related materials such as travel reimbursement, forms and itineraries.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

5.11 Employer Tax Returns and Related Files. These records include, but are not limited to, employer state tax returns, federal tax returns, local tax returns, unemployment quarterly reports, and Federal Forms 1099. These records do not pertain to individual employees but instead describe the local government agency as a whole.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

Administering Internal Operations: Managing Human Resources

(Note: EMAs whose county or municipal government has a separate personnel department may not create or maintain all the records below.)

6.01 Employee Handbooks. These records provide guidance to new employees about personnel rules and other policies and procedures.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

6.02 Employee Newsletters. Internal newsletters are created for EMA employees to communicate personnel policies, news of important events, and information on individual employees.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

6.03 Personnel Hearing Files. These records document various types of personnel hearings, such as demotion hearings, hardship rules hearings, grievance hearings, dismissal appeals, discrimination appeals, layoff appeals, and citizen complaints.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after decision and settlement of all appeals.

6.04 Job Classification and Pay Plans. These records document job classifications for all positions covered by the EMA's personnel system. They include the title, qualifications, duties, and pay range for each position.

- a. **If EMA is under a county or municipal personnel department.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after position is reclassified.

- b. **If EMA is not under a county or municipal personnel department.**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

6.05 Job Recruitment Materials. These records document efforts by the county commission to advertise positions and attract qualified personnel.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the position is filled.

6.06 Examination Records. These records document the development and administration of examinations for employment in county positions.

- a. **Examination history files.** These files document the development of employment examinations. They include questionnaires, comparison studies, final copies of examinations, and job announcements.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after examination is no longer in use.

- b. **Examination administrative files.** These records document the administration of examinations to applicants for positions. They include rating forms, answer sheets, and lists of applicants.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

6.07 Certification Records. These records document the process of certifying applicants for employment. They pertain to individuals deemed qualified for EMA positions after submitting an application and taking an employment examination.

- a. **Employment registers.** These records are lists of individuals declared qualified for certain EMA positions. They include job classifications, names of eligible applicants, and their ranking on the certification list.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after superseded.

- b. **Employee certification files.** These records document the certification process with individual job applicants. They include questionnaires, training and experience records, grades, notifications, and returned postcards and letters.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

6.08 Employment Applications. These are applications by individuals for employment in EMA positions.

- a. **Successful applications.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain in employee personnel file.
- b. **Unsuccessful applications.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.
- c. **Supplemental data forms.** Information on these forms includes the job applicant's name, Social Security number, date of birth, race, gender, and recruitment source. The form may be separated and filed separately from other information on the employment application.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after employee separation or 3 years after an unsuccessful application.
- d. **I-9 forms.** These federal forms are used to verify that persons seeking employment are eligible to work in the United States. Disposition of the employing agency's copy is provided by 8 CFR 274a.2.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after employment or 1 year after separation, whichever is longer.

6.09 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Files. These records document the EMA's compliance with hiring regulations established by the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

Note: "Whenever a charge of discrimination has been filed, or an action brought by the Attorney General – [retain] until final disposition of the charge or action" (29 CFR 1602.31, 1602.20).

6.10 Employee Personnel Files. These records document each EMA employee's work history; they are generally maintained as case files. A file may include information on an employee's training, performance evaluations, disciplinary actions, promotions and demotions, awards, leave, and salary.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee.

6.11 Employee Work Schedules. These records document the daily and weekly work schedules of all EMA employees.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

6.12 Leave and Attendance Records. These records document the attendance and leave status of EMA personnel, both generally and for individual employees.

- a. **Individual employee leave and attendance records (including time sheets).** These are records documenting hours worked, leave earned, and leave taken by individual EMA employees.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- b. **Employee cumulative leave/attendance records.** These records document the final leave status (cumulative leave) of individual EMA employees.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee.
- c. **Employee sick leave donation records.** These records document the donation of sick leave to their colleagues by EMA employees.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

6.13 Payroll Records. These records document EMA payrolls, as well as pay status and payroll deductions for individual employees.

- a. **Annual payroll earnings reports/records documenting payroll deductions for tax purposes.** These are summaries of employees' earnings during a fiscal year, including all deductions and federal Form 941.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 50 years after the end of the tax year in which the records were created.
- b. **Records documenting EMA payrolls.** These records include pre-payroll reports, payroll check registers, payroll action forms, payroll/overtime certification reports, etc.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- c. **Records documenting payroll deduction authorizations.** These records document payroll deduction authorizations for taxes (including W-4 forms), retirement and insurance contributions, and all other deductions withheld from the pay of individual employees.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee.
- d. **Records documenting payroll deductions.** These records document taxes (including W-2 forms), retirement contributions, and all other deductions withheld from the pay of individual employees.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- e. **Employee "Cafeteria Plan" (flexible benefits) records.** These records document salary-reduction type plans authorized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Section 125.
 - i. General information about the plan.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.

- ii. Employee applications, correspondence, enrollment cards and files.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee.

6.14 Employee Insurance Program Enrollment and Claims Files. These files document the EMA's efforts to assist employees and their dependents to enroll in health/life insurance programs, in accordance with guidelines established by the EMA or its parent county or municipality.

- a. **General information on the program.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.
- b. **Employment applications, correspondence, and enrollment cards or files.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after program termination or employee separation.
- c. **Employee claims files.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after audit of the period in which the claim was filed.

6.15 Workmen's Compensation Insurance Claim Files. These files document all claims pertaining to work-related injuries or diseases made by EMA employees (See Code of Alabama 1975 § 25-5-4).

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 12 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the transaction occurred.

6.16 Unemployment Compensation Files. These files provide documentation related to employee claims for unemployment compensation.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after audit of the period in which the transaction occurred.

6.17 Employment Assistance Program Files. These are administrative records documenting the referral of employees to various assistance programs and subsequent services provided.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after audit of the period in which the transaction occurred.

6.18 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Records. These records document administration of the Family Medical Leave program, including leave taken, premium payments, employer notices, and correspondence.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

6.19 Affordable Care Act Compliance Files. These records encompass the documentation submitted to the federal government to demonstrate compliance with the Affordable Care Act.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after submission.

6.20 Training Records. These records document the EMA’s provision of in-service training and professional development for its employees. They do not include materials obtained from outside sources.

- a. **Training standards, policies, procedures and publications.** These records document the EMA’s overall standards, policies, and procedures in providing specialized training to its employees. They may include general policy statements or guidelines, training manuals, or related publications.
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Note: Permanent retention applies to the file copy. Duplicates may be destroyed when no longer needed.

- b. **Training administrative files.** These records document the process of conducting training for employees. They may include individual lesson plans, audiovisual presentations or materials, lists of attendees at workshops or training sessions, sign-in sheets, unpublished handouts, and appraisals of training completed by participants.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

6.21 “Drug-Free Workplace” Records. These records document the EMA’s substance abuse policies and programs, as well as drug and alcohol testing of its employees. Under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, such medical-related records may not be included in Employee Personnel Files. Retention periods are as follows:

- a. **Drug/alcohol abuse policy and procedures documentation.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after policy is superseded.
- b. **Positive employee drug or alcohol test results, documentation of employee refusals to take tests, documentation of employee referrals and treatment in substance abuse programs, copies of county’s annual MIS reports submitted to FTA.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.
- c. **Records related to the collection process and employee training.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.
- d. **Negative employee drug or alcohol test results.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

Administering Internal Operations: Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources

7.01 Annual Inventory Records. These records document all personal property, equipment, or capital outlay by the EMA on an annual basis.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following property audit.

7.02 Receipts of Responsibility for Property. These records document the temporary use or possession of EMA property by employees.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following property audit.

7.03 Insurance Policies and Claims.

a. **Insurance policies.** These policies document all insurance policies carried by the agency. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the policy was terminated.

b. **Insurance claims.** These records document insurance claims filed by the local government agency. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the audit period in which the claim was settled.

c. **Certificates of liability.** These records provide proof of insurance. Certificates are typically valid for a period of one year or less. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.

7.04 Facilities/Building Maintenance Work Orders. These records document routine maintenance activities in EMA buildings or other facilities.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

7.05 Facilities/Building Inspection Records. These records document the routine safety and maintenance inspection of EMA buildings, facilities, and such potentially dangerous items as furnaces, elevators, electronic doors, etc.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

7.06 Facilities/Buildings Security Records. These records document the EMA's efforts to provide security to staff and members of the public using its buildings and facilities, as well as to monitor the admission of staff and visitors to these areas. They may include visitors' logs or sign-in sheets, staff swipe card logs, alarm system logs, recordings of security monitoring or response, and any other records documenting security staff's response to alarms or emergencies.

a. **Security monitoring or response recordings.**

i. Recorded information that does not become part of a case file. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 months.

ii. Recorded information that becomes part of a case file. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until final disposition of all cases for which recording provides evidence.

b. **All other records.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

7.07 Facilities/Buildings Safety Plans and Training Files.

- a. **Safety plans.** These records document the manner in which agency staff are directed to respond in emergencies. Examples of safety plans include, but are not limited to, fire evacuation protocols, severe weather plans, and active shooter protocols.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.
- b. **Training files.** These records document the training and practice undertaken by staff to implement safety plans. Examples of training and practice include, but are not limited to, fire drills, tornado drills, and bomb threat drills.
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

7.08 Motor Pool Use Records. These records document the use of vehicles in the EMA motor pool by county employees.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

7.09 Parking Records. These records document the use of EMA parking facilities by employees or visitors. They may include parking permits, cards, and applications for these items.

- a. **When parking fee is charged.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- b. **When no parking fee is charged.**
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after permit is issued.

7.10 Vehicle and Equipment Ownership and Maintenance Files. These records document the ownership and maintenance of all vehicles and other equipment owned or maintained by the EMA. They may include titles, bills of sale, repair records, and related correspondence.

- a. **Ownership records** (titles, bills of sale, etc.).
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit period in the year in which equipment or vehicle is removed from inventory.
- b. **Maintenance files** (work orders, repair records, and related financial records).
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following property audit.

7.11 Long-Distance Telephone Logs. These records document use of the EMA's long-distance telephone systems by employees during business hours.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

Requirement and Recommendations for Implementing the Records Disposition Authority (RDA)

Requirement

Under the Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-13-23, “no county, municipal, or other local government official, shall cause any. . . record to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of without first obtaining the approval of the local government records commission.” This RDA constitutes authorization by the Local Government Records Commission to dispose of records as stipulated, with the condition that the responsible official must submit a Local Government Records Destruction Notice to the ADAH Government Records Division to document the destruction. The ADAH, which serves as the commission’s staff, retains local records destruction documentation as a permanent record.

Recommendations

In addition, the Agency should make every effort to establish and maintain a quality record-keeping program by conducting the following activities:

The Agency should designate a staff member in a managerial position as its records liaison/records manager, who is responsible for: ensuring the development of quality record keeping systems that meet the business and legal needs of the agency, coordinating the transfer and destruction of records, ensuring that permanent records held on alternative storage media (such as microforms and digital imaging systems) are maintained in compliance with national and state standards, and ensuring the regular implementation of the agency’s approved RDA.

Permanent records in the Agency’s custody should be maintained under proper intellectual control and in an environment that will ensure their physical order and preservation.

Destruction of temporary records, as authorized in this RDA, should occur agency-wide on a regular basis—for example, after the successful completion of an audit, at the end of an administration, or at the end of a fiscal year. Despite the RDA’s provisions, no record should be destroyed that is necessary to comply with requirements of the Open Meetings Act, audit requirements, or any legal notice or subpoena.

The agency should maintain full documentation of any computerized record-keeping system it employs. It should develop procedures for: (1) backing up all permanent records held in electronic format; (2) storing a back-up copy off-site; and (3) migrating all permanent records when the system is upgraded or replaced. If the agency chooses to maintain permanent records solely in electronic format, it is committed to funding any system upgrades and migration strategies necessary to ensure the records’ permanent preservation and accessibility.

Electronic mail contains permanent, temporary, or transitory record information. Although e-mail records can be printed out, filed, and retained according to the RDA’s requirements, the office should preferably employ an electronic records management system capable of sorting e-

mail into folders and archiving messages having long-term value.

The staff of the Local Government Records Commission or the Examiners of Public Accounts may examine the condition of the permanent records maintained in the custody of the Agency and inspect records destruction documentation. Agency records managers and/or the ADAH archivists are available to instruct the staff in RDA implementation and otherwise assist the Agency in implementing its records management program.

The Local Government Records Commission adopted this revised Records Disposition Authority on October 28, 2020.

Steve Murray, Chairman
Local Government Records Commission

Date

By signing below, the agency acknowledges receipt of the retention periods and requirements established by this Records Disposition Authority.

Executive Director
Emergency Management Agency

Date

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